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Letter dated 4 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on initiatives by the Israeli and Palestinian civil societies issued on 2 December 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Marcello **Spatafora**
Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 4 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on initiatives by the Israeli and Palestinian civil societies issued on 2 December 2003 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union (EU) welcomes initiatives from the Israeli and Palestinian civil societies aiming at promoting rapprochement, confidence-building and the establishment of a lasting peace.

The Geneva initiative by Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abed Rabbo confirms the willingness which exists within the two civil societies to achieve peaceful coexistence in two independent, viable and prosperous States, living side by side in security, for the benefit of all Israelis and Palestinians as well as of all countries in the region. It is also helpful to increase the awareness of the public opinions of both sides on the need to identify the necessary efforts and reciprocal concessions in order to achieve a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

In this regard, the EU considers the document presented on 1 December 2003 in Geneva as a valuable contribution by civil society in support of the Quartet's road map, which remains the basis for the immediate resumption of the peace process as endorsed by the entire international community through Security Council resolution 1515 (2003).

The EU reiterates its willingness to further assist in all efforts towards a peaceful solution to the conflict, while condemning violence and terrorism in all its forms.

The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the EFTA countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.